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SCHÖNBERG AND BEYOND

By EGON WELLESZ

SCHÖNBERG is no longer a stranger to America. Several of his works have been performed in England and America; concert criticisms in the daily papers and critical essays written in English have made him somewhat more familiar to the British and American music lover. The judgments passed upon this new composer are varied, but in the case of particular compositions not so divergent as one might have expected. When one reads the criticisms which followed the performances of Schönberg's String Quartet by the Flonzaley Quartet in America, one finds running through all of them a note of surprise at the discovery that Schönberg was, after all, not so much of a "futurist" as the rumors that preceded him from the Continent had led everyone to expect; but that he was an artist, skilled in his craft, whose music did not by any means sound absurd, as many had anticipated. The String Quartet, is, to be sure, one of Schönberg's earlier efforts, but it exhibits all the characteristic marks of his later works, and it is to be hoped that an audience which has shown some measure of intelligent appreciation for this composition will not assume an entirely unsympathetic attitude toward his later works.

He who would explain the Schönberg of to-day, must needs, it appears to me, first show the course of his development; and the man who has a real interest in the study of Schönberg's works must travel the same road. Let him begin with Opus 1 and let him proceed step by step from one composition to the next; for Schönberg is one of those artists who, in each work, even though it be only a short song or a small piece for the piano, aim at some definite and determined expression, and who never repeat themselves. In this respect he offers the sharpest contrast to Max Reger. The works of this master are hard to understand, hard, because of the adoption of archaic elements of style, because of the complicated counterpoint and because of the length of the movements. But when we have once really understood a single work by Reger we have the key to them all. Schönberg's works have each of them a new physiognomy, and those hearers particularly who pride themselves on their musical

ability and knowledge find themselves ever faced by new enigmas. The position of the naïve music lover who is content with the passive enjoyment of what he hears is different. He is immediately overcome by a sense of loftiness of idea and of beauty of melody. It is a matter of indifference to him whether all the old rules have been observed. On the contrary he yields himself without restraint to the first and direct impression.

When I speak thus, it might seem that I held a brief for dilettantism in art. Not so! Only it must not be forgotten that in art there are no "eternal laws" and rules. Each period of history has its own art, and the art of each period has its own rules. There are times of which one might say that every work which was not in accord with the rules was bad or amateurish. Those are the times in which fixed forms exist, to which all artists hold fast, merely varying the content. Then there are periods when artists break through and shatter the old forms. The greatness of their thoughts can no longer be confined within the old limits. (Think of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and the *Symphonie Fantastique* by Berlioz.) There arises a category of art works whose power and beauty can in the beginning be *felt* only and not *understood*. For this reason an audience that knows nothing of rules will enthuse over works of this kind much sooner than the average musician who looks for the rules and their observance. And so it is with Schönberg, who, having first expanded and changed the current forms, has now demolished them entirely. If we are inclined to count this a fault, let us remember the words of Hans Sachs in the "Meistersingers of Nuremberg."

If ye by rules would measure, what doth not with your rules agree,
Forgetting all your learning, seek first what its rules may be.

Schönberg was born on the thirteenth of September, 1874. His youth was passed in moderate circumstances. He had no early instruction in music and when his talent began to stir itself he was compelled to learn his art all by himself from books. He is in the strictest sense of the word an autodidact and a self-made man. And this was a condition very favorable to his peculiar gifts, for he grew up in an epoch in which Richard Wagner so dominated the thoughts and feelings of young musicians, that scarcely a single one could withdraw himself from this influence. Schönberg, however, felt himself drawn toward another artist, one whom his friend and later teacher, Alexander von Zemlinsky, also revered—toward Johannes Brahms. This is very remarkable;

for, as a rule, it is just impetuous youth that finds little joy in the intimate art of Brahms, but is fascinated by the music of Wagner; whereas riper age frequently turns away from Wagner and prefers the quartets of Brahms. We might mention yet another of the first musicians of our day, who has gone through the same process. Richard Strauss began his career as a disciple of Brahms, but turned gradually into the ways Wagner had blazed. Strauss and Schönberg, thanks to their first love, have this advantage over other modern composers—they acquired from Brahms a mastery of technique that knows no limitations. To this they added later the impulse of inventive genius. Whereas so many composers have given us their best in their early works and have failed to forge onward later in life, because they were lacking in technique, Schönberg and Strauss, in their early works, merely improved their faculties by practise, and gathered strength for the greater performances of their later years. It was not until after he had arrived at the age of manhood that Schönberg placed himself under the guidance of Alexander von Zemlinsky, at present conductor of the German opera in Prague. When he saw no possibility of establishing himself in Vienna he went to Berlin. Those were the days of the newly established “Ueberbrettel,” a kind of artistic cabaret. A number of young, enterprising German authors and poets wrote for this “Ueberbrettel” which was managed by Hans von Wolzogen, Frank Wedekind and Otto Julius Bierbaum. At this institution Schönberg became Kapellmeister and later, on the recommendation of Richard Strauss, he was made an instructor at the Stern Conservatory. But here, as in Vienna, Schönberg saw no possibility of deriving permanent means of subsistence. Great plans, which he evolved at this time, and great compositions met with no appreciation, and in 1904 he resolved to return to Vienna.

These were the years of the artistic revolution in Germany known as the “Secession.” Young painters had united under the leadership of Gustav Klimt, the “Wiener Werkstätte” under Josef Hoffmann led the new movement among the architects and interior decorators, and the opera was directed by the genius of Gustav Mahler, who called all these artists to his support in the *mise-en-scène* and thus secured an artistic harmony between the music and the stage setting. Schönberg became acquainted with Gustav Mahler who was then at work upon his great symphonic compositions and who manifested a great deal of interest in Schönberg’s music. Mahler’s was the dominating will in the musical world of Vienna at that time, and his wish that some of

Schönberg's music be performed could not be disregarded. People began to sing Schönberg's songs. The Rosé Quartet—so called after the name of its first violin, the Concert Master of the Vienna opera, Arnold Rosé—performed his sextet and his quartet in D minor and later on his Chamber Symphony. About this time the Vereinigung schaffender Tonkünstler (Association of Creative Musical Artists) was founded, which in its orchestral concerts brought Schönberg's symphonic poem "Pelleas and Melisande" before the public. Schönberg began to gather a small circle of admirers about him. Pupils came and took lessons in harmony and counterpoint. They were fascinated by Schönberg's peculiar faculty of discovering and explaining the faults and weaknesses of their work. Every good teacher is able to discover and correct the faults in the exercises of his pupils. Most teachers would point out the place and say to the pupil, "There is a mistake. Correct it and bring the exercise again next lesson." Some might take the trouble to write down the passage in a correct form in order to show the pupil how he should have done it. It was Schönberg's habit to write down three or four variants of the faulty passage to demonstrate to the pupil not merely how he might have worked correctly, but to point out to him a number of possibilities according to which he might have avoided the error. And this he did, not only in the case of positive mistakes, but in all cases where the compositions submitted to him displayed weakness. In this way he communicated to his pupils the utmost fluency in the technical handling of their musical material and great ease in surmounting the difficulties that arose from the nature of this material.

Schönberg adopts the point of view that the theory of music must be learned like a trade, and that the rules of music have the same significance as the rules according to which a young carpenter or joiner learns his handicraft, and from this viewpoint he wrote his book on harmony. It was written during the last years of his stay at Vienna and is the result of the experience which Schönberg accumulated in the course of his own teaching. This book on harmony (published in the Universal Edition at Vienna), is a large volume written from beginning to end in a style that keeps the reader intensely interested. Clever, frequently indulging in paradox, it is a book for teachers and for intelligent musicians who wish to use it as a handbook in teaching, not a book for pupils. It is so instructive and unique in so many respects that a translation into English would be highly desirable. It would disclose to many musicians an entirely new outlook.

It will some day be necessary for the future biographer of Schönberg to determine the psychological turning point of the artist's creative career in this Vienna period. Although, as I have already said, the works of Schönberg form a logical sequence, each of them leading up to its successor, we do find a gap at a decisive point in the chain, a gap which may perhaps be bridged over and explained by unfinished works. There is, for instance, a second chamber symphony, the greater part of which is complete, but which for some reason unknown to us will always remain a fragment. A far more satisfactory explanation, it seems to me, may be found in a psychological phenomenon to which we have an analogy in Richard Wagner. There is an interval of a number of years, between the composition of "Lohengrin" and of "Rheingold." During these apparently barren years a change of style is accomplished in Wagner's works, a change prepared theoretically by a number of aesthetic and philosophical essays which become the medium of the transition. In order, therefore, to understand the evolution of Wagner the musician, we must fill the gap in the musical development by appealing to Wagner the philosopher, the essayist and the dramatist. Or better—the art phenomenon Wagner as a whole can be explained and understood only by considering all phases of his mental activity at the same time, and where one function is crowded into the background, we must fall back upon the others to complete the picture.

We find Schönberg, during the last years of his second Vienna period, busying himself intensely with the problems of music, problems called up by his activity as a teacher of pupils, many of whom were students of musicology at the University, so that his instruction often took the form of a Platonic dialogue. The living spirit of these conversations is lost, but a reflex of it may be discovered on many pages of the book on harmony. In this book Schönberg reiterates the old pedagogical adage, that instruction oftentimes serves to help the instructor arrive at clearness in his own ideas.

Perhaps, says he, the pupil is nothing more than the teacher's projection of himself into the outer world. The teacher's words are addressed to himself when he speaks to his pupil. He instructs himself, is his own teacher, his own pupil. In allowing the world to listen as he teaches himself, clearing away the rubbish of old and erroneous ideas, substituting, perhaps, new and more farsighted principles, he is acting as he does when, in his capacity as a creative artist, he gives his compositions to the world. He seeks in these works to arrive at a mutual understanding with himself, to grasp his own mind clearly; and the world listens, for it knows well, this matter is its own concern.

Then Schönberg writes a "Drama with music," "Die glückliche Hand" (The Fortunate Hand), a series of grotesque visions, partly realistic, partly symbolical. There are few pieces with which one can compare it, to make clear what we are to understand under this form. The underlying emotional idea might perhaps be best likened to that of one of Strindberg's weird little plays, save that Schönberg, in addition to the spoken word and the suggested thought, counts to a greater extent upon the effect of a picture thrown by a lantern upon a screen on the stage. One might say that the succession of ever-varying colors upon the screen has a musical effect upon the spectator and casts him into particular and definite moods. With Schönberg the association between colors and chords is uncommonly close. Although it may sound paradoxical, there is much truth in a remark that Schönberg once made while discussing his quartet. "At this point" he said "I was unable to express what I felt by means of a chord. I should much have preferred to take a painter's brush and to set down a spot of color here." His publisher, the manager of the Universal Edition, Emil Hertzka, stood by when Schönberg said this, and Schönberg turning toward him remarked laughingly "Oh, don't be frightened! you need have no fear that you will now have to print colored scores for me." The composer had begun to devote himself passionately to painting and his love for this art seems to me to explain the break in his musical development.

One must really have been personally acquainted with Schönberg at this time to understand all this. He was in his best and most vigorous years, full of ideas and of joy in his work. But there was no possibility of making for himself an adequate position in life outside the small circle of his adherents, and so his restless desire to work impelled him to seek new means of expression. He found them in the art of the painter. In a short time and with incredible aptness he acquired the fundamental principles of the technique of painting, and after a year of training he began to paint portraits and visions, which displayed a genius almost sinister. These pictures, placed on exhibition in the rooms of the Vienna art dealer, Hugo Heller, called forth a storm of protest more horrified even than Schönberg's music had. Justly so, and unjustly. They must not be regarded as finished works of art, they are too faulty for that; but as manifestations of genius in a gifted individual they are worthy of the most serious consideration. These pictures and the drama reveal to us the soul and the lot of an artist possessed of almost supernatural power,

such as has not been known since the days of the poet E. T. A. Hoffmann, the painter Delacroix, or the musician Berlioz. They must accordingly be judged by a standard other than that applied to merely pleasant, enjoyable works of art. We must expect no dainty, toying rhythms, but the utterance of a passionate soul, harrowed by doubt, often indulging in sarcasm, but always feeling deeply.

Mahler died in 1911 after a severe and protracted illness. During the few years before his death he passed but little of his time in Vienna, always however keeping in touch with Schönberg. Even on his deathbed his thoughts turned towards his protégé, whom he commended to the care of his friends. After Mahler's death Schönberg felt the loneliness of his position in Vienna and once more changed his quarters to Berlin. As a matter of fact he aroused more interest in this city than in Vienna, and presented himself to the public as a conductor of his own works in Amsterdam, Berlin, Leipzig, Prague, Moscow, St. Petersburg and London. During the next two years he made concert tours through most of the large cities in Germany, producing his melodrama "Pierrot Lunaire." At a bound he leaped into the position of an artist whose name is familiar to everyone, and who is now recognized as one of the leaders in modern music.

As has been stated, it is wrong to found one's judgment of Schönberg as an artist upon acquaintance with his last works only. Even though he himself looks upon his earlier works as mere preliminary efforts, we, in judging him, may not do so. All true artists who look and press forward find in their past performance a source of disturbance to the plans they make for the immediate present. Think of Wagner, who, while longing with his whole heart to have his "Tristan" produced, had nothing but suggestions and reports of new performances of "Rienzi" and "Tannhäuser" dinning into his ears. It is a positive duty of the public to take an interest in every artist's ripper work. The last is the important point.

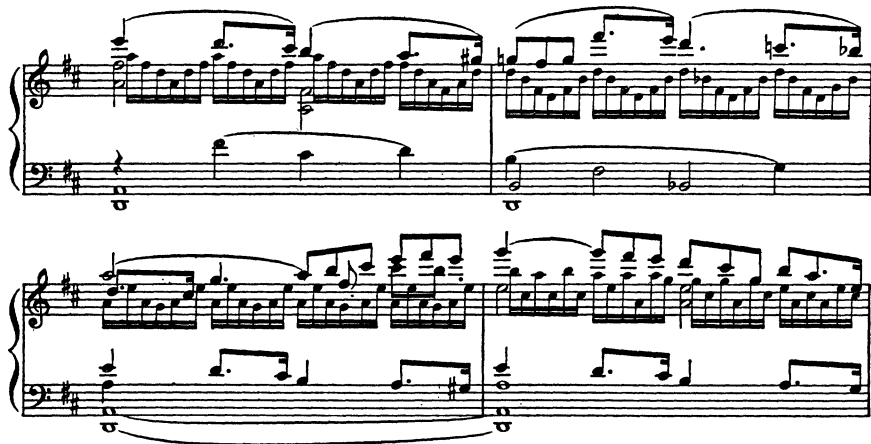
Schönberg's first published works (Opus 1 to Opus 3) are songs, which, so far as their technical character is concerned, may be best likened to the songs of Hugo Wolf. The voice part is a melody independent of the piano accompaniment and the piano part is worked out very elaborately. Each of the songs has its own physiognomy. They are not very easy to sing, but they present no great difficulties to an intelligent singer with a big and flexible voice, and will soon captivate him by their melodic beauty. Opus 1 consists of two songs of some length for baritone;

Opus 2 and Opus 3 are songs to texts by Richard Dehmel, Gottfried Keller, Jens Peter Jacobsen and others. In these songs we begin to notice the broad expressive cantilena, which becomes characteristic of Schönberg's work and which reaches its height in the "Gurrelieder" which we shall treat more at length later.

Schönberg's first large work is the string sextet, Opus 4, "Verklärte Nacht" (Hallowed Night) a tone poem after the poem of the same name by Richard Dehmel, who uses it as an introduction to his "Romance in Romanzas" "Zwei Menschen" (Two Human Beings). Schönberg casts his composition in the mould of a symphonic poem, not as the average young composer would have done, for a large orchestra, but for two violins, two violas, and two violoncellos. With this modest combination our composer succeeds in getting effects that transcend those of many a large orchestral piece. A few bars from the coda of the sextet may serve to illustrate this point. The measures quoted correspond to the last words of Dehmel's poem,

Zwei Menschen gehn durch hohe, helle Nacht
(Two beings move through lofty, radiant night).

The passionate moments of the part which has just preceded are over, the impassioned souls are transfigured. Schönberg shows us—the melody of the first violin is the woman, the cello is the man—how the lovers, forgetting the world and all about them, wander side by side through the starlit glory of the silent night.



The next composition, Opus 5, is the symphonic poem "Pelleas and Melisande" after Maeterlinck's play. The work was composed about the same time as Debussy's music drama. In this

work we find Schönberg already making use of chords and tone combinations which we do not find again until eight years later they occur in Richard Strauss's "Electra." Although the piece moves along in uninterrupted flow, we might designate it as a symphony in four movements, for we can clearly discern four separate parts bound together in thematic connection. The first movement presents to us, after a gloomy introduction, the tender theme of Melisande; then follow Golo, characterized by an energetic motive in the horn, and Pelleas, announced by a clear-voiced trumpet. These themes are developed and combined, one with the others, and so we are brought to the second movement, corresponding to a scherzo. It pictures Melisande's playful sporting with the ring which Golo had given her. The ring falls into the water—threatening chords in the trombones which lead over to the next movement, the meeting of Pelleas and Melisande at the tower. Here the orchestra entrances us with tones of wondrous tenderness that portray Pelleas caressing and toying with Melisande's long locks. But Golo's suspicions are aroused and the lovers must part. This brings us to a broad Adagio overflowing with warm and heartfelt melody. The last part resumes the themes of the beginning but in altered forms, and then the trumpet intones a closing chorale marked by the same ethereal and unearthly expression as the close of the sextet. The opinions of to-day with regard to program music may differ from those of a few years ago. But this work may be grasped with or without the aid of a program, and its greatness lies in the fact that it preconceives a kind of impressionism without abandoning entirely the conventional forms of musical architecture.

This work of large dimensions is succeeded by a set of songs. The eight songs of Opus 6 met with violent opposition at their first performance. To-day they do not seem nearly so revolutionary. They are a logical sequel to the songs of Opus 3, and are in their turn continued in the six songs for orchestra of Opus 8.

During this period, between Opus 4 and Opus 5, Schönberg composed a work, which, when it was published later without an opus number, made his name famous:—the "Gurrelieder," a cycle of ballads by Jens Peter Jacobsen, the great Danish poet, for whose poems Schönberg had conceived a lively fancy. The work is divided into three parts. The first and second consist of ballads for soprano, alto and tenor, composed after the manner of a "Lied" but connected organically one with another by orchestral preludes, interludes and postludes. In the third part a male chorus is added, and at the end, a mixed chorus. Before the

entrance of the mixed chorus, Schönberg inserts a melodrama for a speaking voice with orchestra. The first production of this work, which requires a colossal orchestra and a correspondingly large chorus, took place in Vienna on February 23, 1913. Vienna has never seen such an instantaneous success, and the work met with the same success after performances in Leipzig and Berlin under Nikisch and under Schönberg. The "Gurrelieder" are a drama of love like Wagner's "Tristan and Isolde" or Debussy's "Pelleas and Melisande," only they are, one might say, free from every trace of a "disturbing" dramatic action, a purely lyrical work. The story which these ballads tell is, in a few words, this. King Waldemar comes to Castle Gurre, beholds Klein-Tove and is immediately consumed with love for her. The queen in jealous rivalry accomplishes the death of Klein-Tove. In the anguish of his heart King Waldemar curses God, and in punishment is condemned after death to gallop at night with all his henchmen in a wild chase through the clouds. But his love is stronger than death and damnation. All nature speaks to him of Tove, and each morning when the horrors of the night are past, he finds Tove in the reawakening of Nature. The prelude of the first part portrays in unusually delicate colors the fall of darkness. The very first measures of the orchestra are without a parallel—a flimmering movement in the flutes and violins, sombre harmonies sinking down over the earth, and all is peace and rest. Waldemar's first number continues in this mood. From the distance Tove's answer floats over to us in a song filled with the tenderest emotion, that stretches out over space in one long span of melody, kissed and caressed as by moonbeams in the winsome figures of the solo violin. Then Waldemar hastens to Tove; his steed can scarcely bear him to her speedily enough. The orchestra pictures the galloping ride. The commotion increases until Waldemar's eyes light upon Tove, and now there follows a dialogue of song which must be accounted one of the most beautiful things in the literature of modern music. Here is the beginning of Waldemar's ballad, showing us merely the germ of the melodic material which is developed more and more in the course of the ballad.



In the following extract we see the sweeping breadth and nobility of line of the melody in which Tove confesses her love to King Waldemar. It is really Tove's "theme."



By little and little the dialog assumes a more serious character. Premonitions of death come over the lovers, but they have no fear of the end. Solemn yet pulsing with victory is the song in which Tove tells of her vision of a new and more beautiful life after death, and in which she greets Death as her deliverer.



A long orchestral postlude continues the love scene until it is harshly interrupted by the advent of the message of disaster. A bird of the woods brings the news that Tove had been done to death by the Queen. With this song of sadness, which is a masterpiece in the portrayal of overwhelming sorrow, the first part of the story is brought to a close.

The second part is very short. It contains but one song—King Waldemar's complaint and his rebellion against the will of God. This song, rich in heroic accents, is characterized by an expression of massive power.

Deep gloom marks the beginning of the third part. Waldemar's henchmen awake from the sleep of death and prepare for the storm-ride. A peasant, who hears the wild horsemen approaching, utters a hurried prayer. Ever wilder the storm of the riders draws near and then we hear a twelve-part chorus of male voices, a conception of inexpressible grandeur and power, "Gegrüsst, o König, an Gurre's Strand!" (All hail, O king, on Gurre's shore!)



A short, pathetically grotesque episode interrupts the narrative. The king's jester, so free from blame in this tragedy, bemoans his lot. Schönberg here strikes a key which forecasts very clearly his present style. The fool's song, although it comes immediately after the effective male chorus, has always, in its extravagant way, made a strong impression upon the hearers.

After the fierce ride of the night, the drama is brought to a close by "The wild chase of the Summer Wind." All the crushing accents, the sinister shadows, the gloomy colors are dissipated. The orchestra is thin, the leading of the voices, almost, I might say, like chamber music. This closing number was scored by Schönberg only a short time since, and it shows a radical change in his art of orchestration. Schönberg's instrumental work in the "Gurrelieder" is based, up to this number, on Wagner's Nibelungen orchestra. With the piece in question he has created a new style. It is not a case of new tonal "effects." The novelty arises from the leading of the parts in the various instruments. It is impossible to speak of the beauty and the mastery of art in the last chorus, or to attempt to describe them to one who has not heard them. Those who are able to read score can form some idea of the beauty of the piece in the photolithographic reproduction of Schönberg's autograph, published in the Universal Edition in Vienna. Schönberg's manuscript is so clearly written and so free from error, that it can be read as easily as engraved music.

With the composition Opus 7 to Opus 10, we enter upon a new epoch. They are in a transitional style which will lead to the works of a third epoch, beginning with Opus 11, a set of pieces for the piano. In this second epoch Schönberg evolves a complicated chamber music style, founded technically in many respects on Brahms. But we may discover many intimations of new forms and new musical ideas, we may note a striving toward conciseness and directness of utterance such as we shall find again in the later works. This period opens with the already mentioned string sextet in D minor, Opus 7. The work is of forty-five minutes' duration, and has a new but very simple form. The opening movement, resembling the conventional first movement of a symphony or quartet is very extensive, and the other movements (Scherzo, Adagio, Finale) are nested, so to speak, in the development portion of this first movement, so that the first movement embraces all the others. We find a form similar, but much shorter, in the chamber symphony for fifteen solo instruments. This work was greeted with a storm of hisses on

its first performance in Vienna; but its second performance a few years later was a decided success. It was also played in Berlin under Schönberg and in Leipzig under Nikisch. For the connoisseur this chamber symphony is an extremely interesting work. He is amazed at the polyphonic art displayed in it, but on the whole he gains the impression that it is too much "l'art pour l'art." The symphony does not warm the heart. There are no moments when one is carried away or deeply moved, such as we may find in many passages of the D minor quartet.

The most remarkable work in this group is the second string quartet Opus 10, for the usual strings with the addition of a soprano voice in the third and fourth movements. The peculiarity of this work lies in the fact that the form of the classic quartet is maintained even when the vocal part is added; for the third movement, a setting of the poem "Litany" by Stefan George, is an Adagio with variations, and the fourth movement "Entrückung" (Ecstasy), by the same poet is a Finale with a slow introduction. In the large intervals of the melody, like those in the following violin motive from the last movement,



and in short violent upheavals which swell from piano to fortissimo in the course of a few measures and are suddenly broken off, we see indications of the new style.

With the songs Opus 15 (Poems by Stefan George) and the three piano pieces Opus 11, as Schönberg himself tells us, the new period sets in. Whatever our attitude towards these compositions may be, one thing is certain—the composer who has given us the "Gurrelieder" and the D minor quartet has furnished sufficient proof that he is entitled to a place in the first rank among modern composers, and that we must put faith in everything he may write now or in the future, and even be convinced that every composition bears in itself its own logical justification. Whether the paths which Schönberg treads are destined to become the highways of the music of the future, or whether they are just the last spurs of the old romantic music, here grotesquely distorted to its extreme limits, is an entirely different question, for which we may at present find a psychological but not an aesthetic answer. We have a similar phenomenon in the history of the music of the sixteenth century, in the person of the Italian

composer, Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa. Whereas the use of chromatic notes was permitted within very modest limits in the madrigals of his day, he followed the principle of the chromatic leading of the voices to a logical conclusion, which we cannot observe again until we reach the later works of Richard Wagner. The age which succeeded Gesualdo was interested in other problems and did not follow in the path pointed out by him. (I hope in a future essay to treat this unique personality more in detail.) The same fate may be in store for Schönberg. It is a question whether he will find imitators, for his most gifted pupils, Alban Berg and Anton von Webern, have arrived at a style of aphoristic brevity which admits of no further development. By the same token future composers cannot pass him by unnoticed, and may not with weaker capabilities attempt what he has already accomplished.

In his first period, which includes chiefly vocal works, Schönberg's task was to extend the field of melodic expression; in the second period, devoted largely to instrumental works, he seeks to arrive at the perfection of classic form by vitalizing each individual voice and by an intimate fusion of ideas in the process of transition from one idea to another. Nowhere is there a break or a sudden leap; each thought grows imperceptibly out of that which preceded it. In the third period of his evolution Schönberg attacks both problems, the problem of melody and that of form, together, and seeks to unite them in a new way. In order that his music may follow the slightest emotional impulse, be it never so subtle, he constructs his melody of a string of small particles or motives, which like the dabs of color in an impressionist painting, when viewed close at hand, appear like a conglomeration of disparate ideas thrown together without discrimination. If, however, we stand off and listen, as it were, from afar, these melodic particles all fall into line in the "unending melody" of the piece, a phenomenon which is at the same time a constitutive element of Schönberg's form.

From the technical point of view the advance in this new art lies in the fact that form and content coincide absolutely. It is not a case of setting up a theme or a motive, which then determines the course of the development, but each thematic component of the work is complete in itself, and yet fuses easily with the other parts to make a uniform higher entity.

The points in these works which thrust themselves before all others upon the attention of most auditors, the dissonances and the absence of a determinate key, are matters of secondary

importance. The dissonant character of the work is the result of the contrapuntal treatment of the voices. The harmonies could not be more agreeable, because they are inseparably bound up with the melodic elements of the composition. As we all know, the ear becomes accustomed very quickly to new and unusual dissonances. The difficulty in the apperception of these new works lies in the effort required to follow the leading of the individual voices, and to understand these voices themselves in their incisive brevity. This may perhaps be more clearly explained, if I set down three fragments of melody all of the same general type, but each from a different period of the composer's evolution. It will be apparent that in each successive illustration the same emotional content is expressed in a shorter time and with the aid of fewer tones.

I. Traumleben Op. 6

Es ruht — auf mei-nem Mun - de ein Fröh - ling jung und warm

II. Kammersinfonie Op. 9

III. Monodram (unpublished)

Es war so still — Hinter den Mauern des Gar - tens

The first example from the song "Traumleben" (Dream Life) shows in its leaps of the minor ninth a specimen of the advanced stage of our author's first period. At the same time, it is characteristic, from the point of view of the harmony, for the wealth

of fancy with which Schönberg makes use of the most varied chords without leaving his tonic key, E major. Many another composer would never have found his way back from such a long harmonic excursion, and would have strayed along by-paths into the jungle of modulation. But Schönberg, even in his most daring undertakings, never loses sight of the goal at which he is driving. The second example is a fragment of the second theme of the chamber symphony. We observe here, even though the wide intervals are absent, the strong tendency toward expansion. The theme possesses a motive power of unusual intensity. And finally, the third example represents Schönberg's recent style. It is taken from an unpublished monodrama, "Erwartung" (Expectation). The melody, soaring upward in the second violin, is taken up by the flute. It arches out in a sweeping curve, yet takes at times most unexpected turns. The quotation also affords a good illustration of the new style of orchestration. In the chord which supports the melodic arch the upper tone is played by the oboe, the next by the muted trumpet, and the lowest is held by the flute. This impressionist style of orchestration is found in the five pieces for orchestra, Opus 16, the score of which may be had in the Edition Peters for the nominal sum of two Marks (fifty cents). The opus number of the songs by Stefan George (Opus 15) is misleading, for, as we have seen, they were composed before the piano pieces, Opus 11. When they were first performed in Vienna, Schönberg wrote a few words by way of explanation. He said:

With these songs by Stefan George I have succeeded for the first time in approaching an ideal of form and of expression which I have been holding up to myself for years. I have heretofore had neither the strength nor the sureness to accomplish its realization. Now that I have at last determined to travel this road, I am conscious of having swept aside the vacillation of the aesthetics of the past. And although I strive toward what seems to me a sure goal, I am nevertheless aware even now of the resistance which I shall have to overcome. I feel the rise in temperature due to the opposition of even the most insignificant temperaments, and I foresee that even some of those who have hitherto had faith in me, will be unable to see the necessity of this development.

In truth, the external appearance of these songs, which are bound together in a sort of architectural unity, is entirely new. The piano part is no longer an accompaniment of the voice, as we find it even with Wolf and Richard Strauss; it is entirely independent. It makes no continued use even of a single motive, movement or rhythm, but plays ever new and changing figures

and motives which are rounded off in themselves and need no further working out. The architectonic significance becomes apparent only after we have heard several of them in succession. It is the same with the three piano pieces which were composed immediately after the songs. The second of these has been arranged for concert performance by Busoni. The realization of all these tendencies on a larger scale is brought by the "Five pieces for orchestra" which present to the orchestra a number of entirely new problems. It is no longer the conductor's duty to bring into prominence any single voice which may appear to him to possess thematic importance, nor to equalize or smooth out the mixture of instrumental elements in a chord which may seem ill-balanced. Where Schönberg wants one voice more prominent than the others, he scores accordingly. The conductor must see, as we are informed in a foot note to the second piece, that each performer plays with exactly the degree of loudness or softness that is prescribed, exactly, that is, in the subjective sense with respect to the nature of his instrument and not objectively with regard to the tone effect of the whole instrumental body. Orchestras and conductors must first be educated up to these problems. The conductor must resign one of his hitherto most important functions, that of being a real leader in the course of the actual performance. His work must be accomplished during rehearsals; when the time for actual performance comes, he must efface himself and trust to the members of his orchestra to perform their parts exactly as they were practised during rehearsal.

Of all of Schönberg's compositions the six new piano pieces, Opus 17, seemed least comprehensible. They are apparently amorphous products of very few measures, which leave but a fleeting impression like a cinematograph picture. They are to Schönberg's works viewed as a whole, what leaves from a sketch book are to a painter's work, short, aphoristic but significant pen sketches, thought-fragments, if one may call them so. To judge them as pieces for the piano, as the somewhat misleading title calls them, would be unfair, both to these little attempts and to Schönberg's large works. The composer has here carried his striving for brief utterance, excluding every repetition, to its last extreme. His pupils attempt to go beyond him and to clothe such little sketches in the ample folds of a piece for large orchestra, a proceeding which appears to me to be without aesthetic justification. For one of the first commandments of every art or craft demands that form and the medium of expression be

in some measure commensurate. If we wish to erect a two-story cottage in the country we do not build a lower story of huge blocks of granite. The architectural balance is crushed by the mere sense of material weight. If we set in motion the masses of the large orchestra they must be employed in forms that require a reasonable time in the performance. And even though the desired tone effects in a short piece seem to require larger means, this requirement may not be fulfilled unless the formal development is of adequate extent. This is one of the points in which danger threatens the future of Schönberg and his school. It is not the free form and the atonic system of harmony which menace his progress, for never yet have men been able to place a real hindrance in the way of a bold innovation in art. On the other hand, no irrational exaggeration in the adaptation of the means or in the treatment of the medium of an art has ever manifested a long life. The vagaries of Bernini's successors in the architecture of the later baroque had to make way for a far simpler, one might almost say, an artless art.

In his latest composition, Opus 21, the twenty-one poems of "Pierrot Lunaire," a melodrama for recitation by one speaker with the accompaniment of the piano, flute (piccolo), clarinet (bass-clarinet), violin (viola) and violoncello, Schönberg has avoided these pitfalls and has again created an entirely new and unique work. Once again he could give way to his inclination to portray harshly grotesque and weirdly supernatural subjects. Never before have such fantastically extravagant and such tragi-comic scenes found a cognate genius to translate them into music. But never before has any artist gone so near to the limits of that which the human ear can comprehend. Of course, one must hear the work repeatedly to appreciate its true significance. The repeated renditions in Berlin and the numerous performances in the smaller cities of Germany, have contributed not a little toward making Schönberg's name popular.

Within the last ten years Schönberg has passed through an incredibly rapid development. As he is now but forty-one years of age, who can foretell where his present course will lead him? Whithersoever it tends, we need have no fears for him. He will always find new ideas and present them in a convincing way. And while we find him at first a lone and solitary figure in the field which he has opened up, later surrounded by a few faithful friends and pupils, and finally gathering an ever-increasing host of admirers about him, we also notice other composers like Busoni, Maurice Ravel and Igor Stravinsky, not directly acquainted with

Schönberg, independently following tendencies akin to his. The time is not far distant when we shall see a younger generation imitating him directly. A warning against the danger of this proceeding is timely even now. The result of any attempt to imitate an impassioned genius by those who, not having experienced those crises in life which impelled him to action, can succeed merely in copying the means of expression which he adopted, we have seen in the case of Richard Wagner and the Wagnerites. The imitators of Schönberg could hardly succeed even in copying his means of expression, because his musical language has become so complicated that he himself can offer no theoretical explanation of his latest works and must rely entirely upon his intuitive musical feeling. Perhaps it is just the ultimate failure of such experiments that will lead to the adoption of simpler forms of speech in music. Not, as some guileless souls hope, a return to Mozart—that would be a mere artistic pastime without sense and without profit—but the adoption of a simpler musical language with a new melodic and harmonic style such as Schönberg offers us as a part of his life experience.

We may witness another phenomenon like that which the history of musical art records about the year 1600, when Peri and Caccini abandoned the refined and perfected language and form of the complicated madrigal, and, in a style exhibiting all the uncouthness of youth, but also youth's joyful faith in its own future, composed their first operas. It seems to me that in the nineteenth century and beyond it we have lived through an epoch, which, beginning with the classical composers, led us to the Romantics, and which, with Schönberg as the last of the Romantics, is drawing to its close. It is an epoch of tremendous progress in musical culture and it is rich in great names. But we must not look for the Messiah and expect another and still greater composer to crown the age. Unless I deceive myself—and all historical arguments seem to favor the view that we stand on the threshold of a new era—the coming epoch will be an age of small forms, a period of construction in which we must first discover and develop the new musical language. The sudden and widespread interest in primitive music, in folk-music, and in the music of savage races seems to indicate that this new tendency has already received its theoretical foundation. Men's interest turns not so much toward finished art as toward an art which displays natural force, though it may at times appear uncultivated. This is a source of new musical scales and new rhythms. That we have approached nearer to this new epoch than one might suspect, is

due largely to Arnold Schönberg. In the "Gurrelieder" he has raised the romantic lyrical opera to its highest summit. In his quartets, in the sextet and in the Chamber Symphony he has brought the classical form to perfection, and then in the succeeding works he has demolished all existing forms, conventions and ideas and begun to raise the structure of musical art anew. His personality is too full of life, too specifically artistic, his individuality too pronounced to allow of making the structure he has raised a theoretical and therefore a universal model for those who succeed him. He merely announces: "Now are all the bridges which lead back to the old world of music burned behind you. Plunge manfully into the current of the new era. Let us see you put forth what strength you have!"

(Translated by Otto Kinkeldey)